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TARGETS FOR OPPORTUNITY

Remarks by Governor Michael S. Dukakis
Boston, Massachusetts
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TARGETS FOR OPPORTUNITY

WHEN I RAN FOR GOVERNOR IN 1982, AND WE WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF A RECESSION, I HAD THREE EXPERIENCES THAT SHARPENED MY THOUGHTS FOR THE REST OF THAT CAMPAIGN AND BEYOND:

- IN THE NORTH ADAMS FALL FOLIAGE PARADE, WHEN UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE NORTHERN BERKSHIRES WAS 20%, MEN AND WOMEN CALLED OUT TO ME THAT THEY NEEDED JOBS AND THEY NEEDED HOPE.

- AT A MEETING IN ROXBURY, I HEARD THAT UNEMPLOYMENT AND DISINVESTMENT--20 YEARS' WORTH OF IT--HAD BROUGHT THAT COMMUNITY TO THE BRINK OF DESPAIR.

- AND WHEN I TOOK THE PRESS ON A TOUR OF NEW BEDFORD TO SHOW THEM THAT THAT HISTORIC CITY WAS NOT 'THE END OF THE UNIVERSE', I REALIZED THAT IT WOULD TAKE MORE THAN JUST WORDS TO BRING SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF THIS STATE'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY.

SINCE 1982, WE'VE DONE MORE IN MASSACHUSETTS THAN SIMPLY RECOVER. TOGETHER, WE'VE CREATED AN ECONOMIC MIRACLE THAT OTHER STATES--AND AS I LEARNED THIS WEEK, THE PRIME MINISTER OF BELGIUM--WANT TO UNDERSTAND AND EMULATE.

BUT I'VE ALSO LEARNED THAT BEHIND THE STATISTICAL MASK OF FULL EMPLOYMENT, THERE ARE SHARP CONTRASTS:

- IN THE SHADOW OF A DOWNTOWN BOSTON THAT IS BURSTING AT THE SEAMS IS A BLACK COMMUNITY IN WHICH UNEMPLOYMENT IS STILL DOUBLE THE STATE AVERAGE AND MOST YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WANT TO WORK CAN'T FIND DECENT JOBS.

- LOWELL IS OUR GREATEST SUCCESS STORY, WITH A BOOMING DOWNTOWN AND SO MUCH HIGH TECH GROWTH THAT WE HAVE GRIDLOCK ON ROUTE 3--A PROBLEM WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH. BUT FIVE BLOCKS FROM LOWELL CITY HALL, IN A NEIGHBORHOOD CALLED 'THE ACRE' WHERE MY DAD ONCE LIVED, IS POVERTY, ABANDONED HOUSING, AND CRIPPLING UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG THE MOSTLY HISPANIC RESIDENTS. AND JUST A FEW MILES DOWNRIVER IS LAWRENCE--A POOR CITY WHOSE ECONOMIC MIRACLE IS ONLY JUST BEGINNING.

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- IN THE PIONEER VALLEY, WE HAVE THE SEEDS OF A HEALTHY AND DIVERSE ECONOMIC FUTURE--IN THE REBIRTH OF DOWNTOWN SPRINGFIELD, THE ARRIVAL OF DIGITAL AND WANG, AND AN EDUCATIONAL RICHNESS SECOND ONLY TO THAT IN BOSTON AND CAMBRIDGE. BUT IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF SPRINGFIELD AND HOLYOKE, IN A DOZEN SMALLER DOWNTOWNS, IN THE STRUGGLING MACHINE TOOL INDUSTRY OF FRANKLIN COUNTY, AND IN THE STILL UNDERUTILIZED INDUSTRIAL POTENTIAL OF WESTOVER AIRPARK, WE HAVE LOTS OF WORK YET TO DO.

- AND THIS CHRISTMAS, THE SHOPPING MALLS OF THE METROWEST REGION--WHERE UNEMPLOYMENT IS 2% AND TRAFFIC IS ALL BUT UNBEARABLE--HAD TO BUS IN 1200 WORKING PEOPLE FROM ATHOL AND ORANGE--A 100-MILE ROUND-TRIP COMMUTE--WHO COULDN'T FIND JOBS IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES.

MAKE NO MISTAKE--WE ARE GOING TO DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO MAINTAIN A CLIMATE FOR GROWTH EVERYWHERE IN THIS COMMONWEALTH. BUT IT IS THESE PLACES THAT ARE STILL OUT OF THE MAINSTREAM, WHERE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY STILL HASN'T COME HOME TO STAY, THAT WE CALL OUR "TARGETS FOR OPPORTUNITY." THEY ARE AS LARGE AS THE "NORTHERN TIER" THAT EXTENDS FOR 60 MILES ALONG ROUTE 2, AND AS SMALL AS A STRUGGLING DOWNTOWN OR CITY NEIGHBORHOOD. BUT TOGETHER, THEY ARE OUR NUMBER-ONE ECONOMIC PRIORITY.

OF COURSE, NONE OF THIS IS NEW FOR ME, OR FOR YOU. BACK IN THE MID-SEVENTIES, WE BEGAN WORKING TOGETHER ON THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF AN ECONOMIC FUTURE FOR ALL OF MASSACHUSETTS:

- WE BEGAN BUILDING MAJOR PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS THAT WE KNEW, SOMEDAY, WOULD BRING NEW GROWTH AND NEW JOBS TO OUR MOST DISTRESSED REGIONS--PROJECTS LIKE I-190 IN WORCESTER COUNTY, THE MISSING LINK OF I-495 IN SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS, AND THE SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR--THE BIGGEST PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN THE HISTORY OF NEW ENGLAND--DOWN THE SPINE OF BOSTON'S POOREST NEIGHBORHOODS.

- WE RECOGNIZED, TOGETHER, THAT OUR CITY AND TOWN CENTERS WERE NOT ONLY A FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCE FOR JOBS AND GROWTH, BUT AN ANCHOR OF OUR HERITAGE AND OUR QUALITY OF LIFE THAT WE WERE IN DANGER OF LOSING FOREVER.

- AND WE CREATED, TOGETHER, AN ARRAY OF FINANCING TOOLS FOR INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT OUTSTRIP ANYTHING IN THE COUNTRY.

AND NOW, WE GET TO SEE THE FRUITS OF OUR LONG LABORS. JUST LOOK AT THE MONTACHUSETT REGION IN NORTHERN WORCESTER COUNTY. NOW THAT I-190 IS DONE, AND YOU CAN GET THERE FROM THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM:

- DOWNTOWN FITCHBURG, THANKS IN LARGE MEASURE TO THE VISION AND COURAGE OF ENTREPRENEURS LIKE DAVE DONAHUE, IS ON ITS WAY BACK AS A COMMERCIAL CENTER.

- G.E. IS EXPANDING RIGHT IN THE HEART OF TOWN, CREATING NEW JOBS AND INVESTING IN NEW TECHNOLOGIES. AND IN AN UNPRECEDENTED PARTNERHSIP, THE STATE, THE CITY, AND GE ARE BUILDING A GARAGE THAT IS THE KEY TO EVEN MORE REINVESTMENT.

- ONE OF OUR BEST HIGH TECH FIRMS, L.F.E., HAS MOVED ITS HEADQUARTERS INTO THE BEAUTIFULLY RENOVATED LANCASTER MILLS IN CLINTON--AND WE KNOW THERE WILL BE MORE PROJECTS LIKE IT.

- AS WE COMPLETE THE NEW INTERCHANGE AT ROUTES 2 AND 31, THE INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN FITCHBURG AND LEOMINSTER AND STARTING TO FILL UP, AND TONY LACAVA IS BUILDING A HOTEL, OF ALL THINGS, RIGHT THERE ON ROUTE 2.

- AND TWO COMPANIES--BOGUE ELECTRIC AND CONTROLONICS--HAVE MOVED INTO FITCHBURG IN PART BECAUSE WE SOLD THEM ON THE IDEA, FACE TO FACE.

THE WORK IS HARDLY DONE, BUT IN JUST TWO SHORT YEARS THE FITCHBURG-LEOMINSTER AREA HAS SEEN NEW PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND CREATED CLOSE TO 5,000 NEW JOBS.

TO BE SURE, MUCH OF THIS IS HAPPENING BECAUSE THE ENTIRE MASSACHUSETTS ECONOMY IS GROWING. A RISING TIDE DOES LIFT ALL BOATS. BUT SOME BOATS SEEM TO RISE FASTER THAN OTHERS.

TWO WEEKS AGO, I WAS ABLE TO ANNOUNCE 1984 UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES THAT SHOW REAL PROGRESS IN ALL PARTS OF THIS STATE. AND THAT'S GREAT NEWS.

BUT THE SOFT SPOTS ARE STILL SOFT, RELATIVELY SPEAKING. IN MOST OF OUR "TARGET" AREAS, UNEMPLOYMENT IS STILL WELL ABOVE THE STATEWIDE AVERAGE.

AND IN MOST OF THEM, WE HAVE YET TO ACHIEVE A SENSE OF LONG-TERM ECONOMIC WELL-BEING--A SENSE THAT THERE IS ENOUGH STRENGTH AND ENOUGH DIVERSITY THAT THE LOCAL OR REGIONAL ECONOMY COULD COME THROUGH THE NEXT RECESSION IN GOOD SHAPE.

AND THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE TO INSURE.

WHAT IS STATE GOVERNMENT'S PART IN ALL OF THIS? WE CERTAINLY CAN'T DO IT ALONE--QUITE THE CONTRARY. THE ONLY PLANNING THAT EVER WORKS IS PLANNING THAT IS DONE LOCALLY, AND INVOLVES THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE AND WORK IN AN AREA. AND OBVIOUSLY, MOST ECONOMIC INVESTMENT IS PRIVATE INVESTMENT.

BUT WE'VE KNOWN FOR TEN YEARS IN MASSACHUSETTS THAT STATE GOVERNMENT HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY.

- WE CAN BE YOUR SALESMEN, AND WE'RE GLAD TO DO IT. I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF SOUTHEASTERN MASS. KNOW ABOUT THIS, BUT LAST MAY I TOOK 40 LEADERS OF INDUSTRY AND REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT ON A TOUR OF DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN FALL RIVER, NEW BEDFORD, AND TAUNTON. THEY LIKED WHAT THEY SAW--AND THE MESSAGE GOT THROUGH TO COMPANIES LIKE A.T.&T. NEXT MONTH, I'LL BE DOING THE SAME THING IN THE NORTHERN BERKSHIRES. AND NO ONE GETS TO TALK TO ME THESE DAYS WITHOUT HEARING ABOUT THE SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR. BUT LET'S FACE IT, "SELLING" IS ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG.

- WE CAN BE THERE WHEN YOU NEED US TO PUT PROJECTS TOGETHER. NOTHING HAS MADE ME HAPPIER THAN OUR ABILITY TO HELP DELIVER GCA TO THAT OLD TEXTILE MILL IN LAWRENCE, OR SURREY MANUFACTURING TO THE PARKER BROTHERS BUILDING IN TAUNTON, OR DIAMOND INTERNATIONAL TO NEW, LOCALLY-BASED OWNERSHIP IN PALMER. BUT EVEN DEALS LIKE THOSE ARE AT THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG.

WHAT YOU NEED US TO DO MOST OF ALL IS TO ROLL UP OUR SLEEVES AND WORK WITH YOU OVER THE LONG HAUL--TO HELP YOU DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR YOUR AREA AND HELP YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN.

- THAT'S WHY I'VE BROUGHT THE LEADERSHIP OF SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS TOGETHER INTO "SEMTECH"--A COMMISSION THAT WILL RECOMMEND WAYS TO BRING HIGH TECH INTO THE REGION AND CREATE A GENERATION OF HOME-GROWN INNOVATORS AND ENTREPRENEURS TO BOOT.

- THAT'S WHY I'VE ASKED OVER 50 LEADERS IN NORTHERN BERKSHIRE COUNTY TO JOIN DR. CATHERINE TISINGER, THE NEW PRESIDENT OF N. ADAMS STATE, AND MY FRIEND JOHN DEROSA ON A TASK FORCE THAT WILL CREATE A NEW ECONOMIC AGENDA FOR THAT TROUBLED PART OF OUR STATE.

- THAT'S WHY I'M SO PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO SUPPORT THE BLACKSTONE VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL IN ITS UNPRECEDENTED EFFORT TO PLAN A BETTER FUTURE FOR ELEVEN TOWNS IN THAT HISTORIC BUT STRUGGLING AREA. AND WHY I'M SO PLEASED THAT WORCESTER STATE COLLEGE, UNDER PRESIDENT VAIRO, IS JOINING THE EFFORT.

- AND THAT'S WHY MY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL IS WORKING WITH CITY HALL AND LITERALLY EVERY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY IN STATE GOVERNMENT TO PLAN A NEW ERA OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN ROXBURY AND NORTH DORCHESTER.

THESE STRATEGIES AREN'T EXPERIMENTAL, AND THEY AREN'T PIE IN THE SKY. WE KNOW WHAT VIRTUALLY EVERY REGION AND COMMUNITY IN MASSACHUSETTS WANTS AND NEEDS FOR ITS ECONOMIC FUTURE:

- INDUSTRIAL GROWTH RICH IN DIVERSITY AND INNOVATION. THERE'S ROOM ACROSS MASSACHUSETTS FOR HIGH TECH AND OLDER INDUSTRY ALIKE, FOR MINI-COMPUTERS AND FOR FISH PROCESSING, FOR APPAREL AND FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES THAT NO ONE HAD EVEN HEARD OF TEN YEARS AGO. BUT THERE'S ROOM ONLY FOR THOSE COMPANIES THAT ARE READY TO USE THEIR HEADS, BY APPLYING NEW TECHNOLOGIES, AND THEIR HEARTS, BY TAKING RISKS AND DARING TO GROW.

- COMMUNITY RENEWAL. THE REVITALIZATION OF OUR OLDER DOWNTOWNS AND NEIGHBORHOODS MUST BE PART AND PARCEL OF ANY REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY. OVER THE LAST DECADE THIS STATE AND HER COMMUNITIES HAVE WRITTEN THE BOOK ON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION. INITIATIVES LIKE C.A.R.D., HERITAGE PARKS, AND NOW THE NEW CITY AND TOWN COMMONS PROGRAM ARE JUST SOME OF THE INGREDIENTS OF A REVIVAL THAT NO OTHER STATE HAS EVEN DREAMED OF. AND THROUGH INITIATIVES LIKE THE MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING PARTNERSHIP I ANNOUNCED ON THURSDAY, THERE IS NO REASON WE CAN'T ATTACK NEIGHBORHOOD BLIGHT AND ABANDONMENT WITH THE SAME DETERMINATION AND SUCCESS.

- TRADE AND TOURISM. MASSACHUSETTS PLAYS IN A WORLD-WIDE ECONOMIC ARENA, AND THAT HAS TO MEAN MORE THAN TOURISM ON THE CAPE AND CONVENTIONS IN BOSTON--ALTHOUGH THOSE ARE BOTH OPPORTUNITIES OF NATIONAL PROPORTIONS. WE NEED TO BRING TOURISTS TO ALL OF OUR HERITAGE PARKS, AND TO THE NORTHERN TIER, AND TO THE BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME IN SPRINGFIELD. WE NEED TO MAKE ALL OF OUR REGIONAL CAPITALS CENTERS FOR COMMERCE AND TRADE SHOWS AND CONVENTIONS.

STATE GOVERNMENT CAN PROMOTE ALL OF THESE RESULTS THROUGH OUR ABILITY NOT ONLY TO INVEST OUR RESOURCES, BUT TO TARGET THEM. IN EACH OF THREE VITALLY IMPORTANT AREAS, MASSACHUSETTS CAN STEP IN AND MAKE THE KEY PUBLIC INVESTMENT THAT CAN LEVERAGE EVEN LARGER PRIVATE COMMITMENTS.

- WE CAN INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE.
- WE CAN INVEST IN BUSINESSES AND DEVELOPMENT, THROUGH OUR ARRAY OF PUBLIC AND QUASI-PUBLIC FINANCING VEHICLES.
- AND WE CAN INVEST IN PEOPLE, BY TRAINING, EDUCATING, AND RE-EDUCATING OUR WORKFORCE.

LAST WEEK I SIGNED INTO LAW SEVEN NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. EARLIER THIS MORNING YOU LEARNED ALL ABOUT THEM--HOW THEY WILL WORK, HOW THEY COMPLEMENT THE RESOURCES WE ALREADY HAVE, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, HOW EACH OF YOUR COMMUNITIES CAN USE THEM TO CREATE MORE JOBS AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES.

THESE PROGRAMS ARE IMPORTANT:

- THE NEW MIFA GUARANTEED LOAN PROGRAM
- THE NEW SAVINGS BANK DEVELOPMENT FUND
- THE NEW DOWNTOWN AND NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAMS AT THE LAND BANK, AND THE REAUTHORIZATION OF CDAG, WHICH TOGETHER GIVE US, IN EFFECT, A COMPLETE UDAG CAPABILITY HERE AT THE STATE LEVEL
- THE S.H.A.R.P. AND ABANDONED HOUSING BILLS, WHICH TOGETHER FORM THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR NEW "MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING PARTNERSHIP"
- AND THE NEXT STEP FORWARD IN THE CREATION OF CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.

AT THE SAME TIME, I CAN'T HELP THINKING THAT THESE NEW PROGRAMS--IMPORTANT THOUGH THEY ARE--ARE LIKE SEVEN NEW TREES IN THE FOREST. AND WE STARTED PLANTING THE FOREST IN MASSACHUSETTS TEN YEARS AGO.

LAST YEAR 500,000 PEOPLE VISITED LOWELL. TEN YEARS AGO, WHEN LOWELL'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE WAS 16%, PEOPLE WERE TALKING ABOUT KNOCKING DOWN THE MILLS AND FILLING IN THE CANALS. KIDS COMING OUT OF LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL HAD ONE THOUGHT--TO GET FAR AWAY FROM LOWELL AND NEVER COME BACK. IF ANYONE HAD SAID THEN THAT HALF A MILLION PEOPLE WOULD VISIT LOWELL--OR THAT UNEMPLOYMENT IN THAT CITY WOULD BE 4%, OR THAT THERE WOULD BE MORE CONSTRUCTION PER CAPITA IN LOWELL THAN IN HOUSTON, OR L.A., OR MIAMI--HE'D HAVE BEEN LOCKED UP.

BUT IT'S HAPPENED. NOT BY ACCIDENT. IT HAPPENED BECAUSE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT, AND MOST OF ALL PEOPLE--ABOVE ALL, PEOPLE--WORKED TOGETHER AND DREAMED TOGETHER.

SO TODAY I SAY TO EVERY ONE OF YOU--LOCAL OFFICIALS, BANKERS, BUSINESSMEN, COMMUNITY LEADERS--THAT THIS SAME REBIRTH CAN HAPPEN IN EVERY ONE OF OUR 'TARGETS FOR OPPORTUNITY" HERE IN THE 1980'S. I SAY ESPECIALLY TO ALL OF YOU WHO WORK IN STATE GOVERNMENT--OUR COMMUNITIES ARE AT THE THRESHOLD OF OPPORTUNITY, THEY ARE READY TO TAKE RISKS FOR THAT FUTURE, AND YOU MUST BE THEIR PARTNERS, THEIR ALLIES. WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SOMETHING IN THIS STATE THAT PERHAPS NO OTHER STATE HAS EVER BEEN ABLE TO DO--AND THAT IS TO BRING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY TO ALL OF OUR PEOPLE, ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES.

AND NOW IS SURELY THE TIME.